

## TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

9 – 11 a.m.

Room 333 City Hall

### *Meeting Notes*

**Committee members present:** Kathleen Boe, Tom Evers, Jenifer Hager, Cyndi Harper, Jeff Johnson, Dan Kenney, Lance M. Knuckles, Peter MacDonagh, Heidi Ritchie, Ben Shardlow, Sarah Stewart, Alene Tchourumoff, Mackenzie Turner Barga

**Guests:** [left blank for now]

**Staff/consultants present:** Kjersti Monson, Jennifer Ringold, Lacy Shelby, Hilary Dvorak, Marsha Wagner

#### **1. Welcome**

The inaugural meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Lacy Shelby, Principal Urban Designer, City of Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED). Ms. Shelby turned the meeting over to Kjersti Monson and Jennifer Ringold to provide a broad overview.

Kjersti Monson, Director, Long Range Planning, Minneapolis CPED, welcomed the people in attendance who are engaged in this process, including representatives of boards, nonprofits, foundations, conventions and visitors, transit, sports, and others. She said that the collective goal is to create a competitive, livable, active downtown that attracts events and business, residents and visitors by forming a clear consensus around these shared goals. Development of the Downtown Public Realm Framework (DPRF) began in conversations with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) about one year ago. The City's plan will be done in conjunction with MPRB's Downtown Service Area Master Plan (DSAMP) with involvement and input of other stakeholders.

Jennifer Ringold, Director of Strategic Planning, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), thanked Ms. Shelby and Ms. Monson for their leadership and commended them and City staff for their strategic thinking. Downtown Minneapolis is changing, and for the MPRB this project began in 2007 with its Comprehensive Plan identifying Downtown as a future study area. This is a great opportunity for them to move forward with the Downtown Service Area Master Plan (DSAMP). The goal of this first meeting is to get a sense of where we are currently, where we need to go, and what is missing in order to accomplish that.

#### **2. Introductions**

Ms. Ringold invited Technical Advisory Committee members, Park Board and City staff, and others in attendance to introduce themselves.

#### **3. Project Overview**

MPRB's project team is working with a Steering Committee and the TAC to develop its Downtown Service Area Master Plan, with additional input from MPRB's forestry, recreation, and operations staff. MPRB's consultant team—composed of LHB, SRF and MIG—is offering support, and they will seek input from Downtown Minneapolis neighborhood groups, coordinating agencies and other stakeholders.

Ms. Monson said the City process for the DPRF will be executed in-house, with input from Downtown Minneapolis neighborhood groups, coordinating agencies and other stakeholders through this forum (TAC) and the Steering Committee, which they will be sharing with the MPRB. The City's effort has three pillars: coordinating efforts and resources, integration of many modes of transit, and operations. Recognizing that the City doesn't have the resources to do this alone, they are seeking ideas and input from peer cities and these Committees to inform the plan.

The DSAMP will set the vision for future park and recreation opportunities in the Downtown area. Acknowledging that there are challenges in this area—i.e., lack of space, some non-public and public spaces—it will establish a new, urban model for service delivery, maintenance, funding, and operation of parks in Downtown Minneapolis. They will consider the needs of visitors, residents, and Downtown workers.

Ms. Shelby, who has experience with New York City initiatives and projects under Mayor Bloomberg including Times Square, will be leading the effort on behalf of the city. She said this is a unique position to have the MPRB and City working together to advance similar and shared goals. The work of the TAC and Steering Committee will result in two separate documents that will be integrated and will be used to inform a connected and livable Downtown community. The City will create a policy document focused on guiding the enhancement of priority streets and public spaces. It will provide a unified vision to inform and coordinate public and private investments in the public realm.

#### **4. Development and Approval Processes of Plans**

Ms. Ringold said that the two entities will be in constant dialogue to ensure that the process is efficient and easy for Committee members. The MPRB and City have separate approval processes. The MPRB is working with the TAC, a community advisory committee and others previously mentioned to create a draft document for the Downtown area which will be subject to a 45-day public comment period. After capturing and incorporating comments and feedback at public meetings, the document will advance to the Planning Committee for a public hearing and finally to the full Park Board for approval.

Ms. Monson said the City process is formal, and will result in a physical framework plan, including development guidelines and other features, for the Downtown area. The plan will also be subject to a 45-day public comment period, followed by City Planning Commission meetings, public hearings, and Zoning and Planning/Transportation and Public Works meetings before advancing to the City Council for approval.

#### **5. Detail Information about Plans and Project Schedules**

MPRB plans to have Service Area Master Plans in place for all five areas of Minneapolis by 2018, but this year will be focusing on the Downtown and South service areas. These plans will include long-term goal setting, capital improvements, operations, and programming and maintenance models. The DSAMP will look at existing parks to understand how to best serve the needs of residents, visitors and workers, and their relationship to parks just outside of the Downtown boundaries, i.e. Bryn Mawr Meadows and Curry Park.

Referencing a map of the Downtown Service Area [[PPT Page 9](#)], Ms. Ringold said that they will not be doing detailed master planning on the St. Anthony Falls Regional Park (Central Riverfront) because that has been in the works and is almost complete. They will be looking closely at others parks—Elliot, Loring, Park Avenue Triangle, Franklin Steel Square and Gateway—and will identify a

new park location to serve the Downtown area. The final Master Plan will outline capital improvements; acquisition needs and strategies; program, maintenance and operations guidelines; cost estimates and potential funding sources; and potential needs for new park and recreation amenities to serve residents, workers and visitors. Also, recognizing that the MPRB may need to work with partners to serve all of the park and recreation needs of the Downtown area.

The City's DPRF [[PPT Page 13](#)] will include an inventory of existing policies, practices and elements that will be used to identify new tools and processes that will enable and enhance investments in the public realm. Existing amenities, such as garbage cans and benches, have been analyzed; 2800 data points have been collected on these features. Existing corridors and public spaces are being examined as pieces of a larger whole, building on work that has already been done by Access Minneapolis and design guidelines for streets and sidewalks to determine what additional enhancements and features can be used. The DPRF will also examine processes that enable these features to happen to determine if the process needs to be examined. New tools and processes will be identified that will enable private investment in the public realm. The geographic project limits are porous but will generally align with MPRB's, with the exception of extending across the Mississippi River into Northeast Minneapolis.

The main outcomes of the project include:

- Physical framework plan
- Development guidelines and what tools will enable developers to make different types of investments
- Enhancing the permit program and processes
- Event programming guide, looking at programmable space Downtown that is currently available
- Integrated modes of transportation – how they intersect and connect with each other
- Implementation guide – identifying partnerships and ways to put some of these practices in the ground

Looking ahead at the next year, the City process and the MPRB process both begin with kickoff and organizational meetings in November, with draft guidelines and integrated analysis completed by early 2015. The next steps involve assessment and exploration via open houses and charrettes with neighborhood and other groups through March of 2015, followed by fine-tuning and further definition through community review. By the end of October refinements and recommendations will be completed on two separate documents, which will be ready to submit for final approval by the City Council and Park Board, respectively, by December 2015. There is a lot to do in a short amount of time.

Ms. Ringold, referencing [[PPT Page 16](#)] showing the timeline for the process, noted the differences and similarities between the two processes. At the end of 2015 when the entities are making their recommendations, the MPRB will have identified where new parks should be located in the City, what steps to take, and how existing parks can be improved. The City will have a new set of tools to help shape the public realm. Public park spaces and the City public realm will start to speak to each other in ways that they don't currently, and that will help make Downtown feel like more of a cohesive and legible space.

Some of the ongoing projects that will be incorporated and referenced in these processes include: South Service Area Master Plan, St. Anthony Falls Regional Park (Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park) Master Plan, Waterworks, Downtown Commons (two blocks adjacent to the new Vikings stadium, plus transit plaza), Nicollet Mall improvements, Samatar Crossing, Park and

Portland Avenues, North Loop development and streetscape. Transit will also be considered, where people are coming from and going to.

#### **6. Role of the TAC – Lacy Shelby**

This initiative is a new way of doing things, with two organizations partnering and advancing two separate plans. The TAC is one piece of a larger engagement. TAC members will:

- Become knowledgeable about the project and its scope
- Advise staff and the Steering Committee throughout the planning process on technical considerations, challenges and issues associated with themes, values, design impacts and implementation strategies, as well as recommending others to invite to be on the Committee
- Represent the policies and interests of their appointed public agencies
- Bring technical knowledge and expertise in their field, share best practices and innovative strategies
- Advise City and MPRB staff and the Steering Committee on methods for implementing the recommended policy direction
- Represent the work of their departments and their own technical knowledge.
- Provide technical analysis and review, comments and recommendations on draft plan documents, programs, studies and issues
- Provide technical feedback on the impact and implications of plan concepts in preparation for broader engagement activities and final draft development
- Engage the TAC in meaningful discussions around feasibility, challenges and opportunities
- Advise and reference appropriate zoning, regulatory, ordinances relevant to the plan
- Identify funding partnerships and opportunities for dedicated revenue supporting the public realm

Each meeting will have a program and agenda, but there will also be an opportunity for open forum discussion and interaction, and identifying additional partnerships and challenges. In addition to attending monthly meetings, specific information may be sent to some or all Committee members for their feedback and ideas between meetings. The City may reach out to Committee members on an individual basis if warranted by their specific expertise or knowledge.

#### **7. Relationships between Committees and Reporting – Jennifer Ringold**

As Committee members are working through their process of reporting back to their representative organizations—i.e., Council Member or Parks Foundation—staff from the City and/or MPRB are available to accompany them if that would be helpful. City and MPRB staff are available to attend and speak at meetings, and can also provide materials. Marsha Wagner is providing administrative support to both Committees, so questions, comments and communications should be sent to her. [marsha@castlevisions.com]

Ms. Monson acknowledged that this will be a complicated process with two separate documents created by two separate organizations. Having one person receiving and distributing communications will be helpful.

The upcoming Steering Committee meetings will be held at the Minneapolis Park Board Headquarters in the Board Room. The first meeting will be held on December 2, with subsequent meetings scheduled for January 15, March 19, May 21 and July 16. Meetings will start at 6:30 p.m. and last two hours. TAC Members are invited to attend, along with members of the public.

TAC meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of every month and will be held at Minneapolis City Hall in Room 319. TAC will meet on the first Tuesday of each month, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The meeting dates are: December 2, January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7 and May 5.

There was an opportunity for questions before beginning the engagement discussion.

Q: If I cannot attend a meeting, would you like me to send a representative in my place?

A: Yes, send a representative to keep us posted and make sure there's an opportunity within the organization to get them up to speed and pass information back. Given that every monthly meeting will be pretty dense due to the large amount of work to be accomplished having a representative there will be helpful in keeping things moving forward.

Q: Have you considered doing events or engagement strategies jointly instead of holding two separate meetings?

A: Great idea and we have had discussions about the opportunity to partner on certain types of events. MPRB has hired a community engagement consultant and the City is working in-house, but there are a lot of synergies and this is a work in progress.

Q: What is the time frame for these two plans?

A: MPRB 20-25 year vision; City at least a 10 year plan. The City plan will be adopted city policy and incorporated into a larger plan. This process has been initiated by the MPRB and City.

## **8. Engagement Discussion**

MPRB and City staff presented five questions to the TAC to inform next steps and to identify opportunities.

*Please share one thing you wish our plans could cover or do.*

- Request 20-25 percent tree canopy cover
- Make sure there are accessibility features if park structures are developed
- In the City process, work on capital and operations/maintenance costing
- Implement clear best practices and recommendations for interactions between MPRB and City in terms of managing public realm; a clear outline of how to do it jointly
- Consider opportunities for urban agriculture
- During evaluation process of any space, default would not automatically be hard surfaces but that green solutions or vegetation be considered equally
- Commitment to the role of transit, particularly passenger waiting areas, stations and stops, making sure they are best situated from a design point of view but also from transit operations point of view; consistency, large enough to accommodate growing numbers of passengers
- Hennepin County has assets within Downtown, so identify those and how they might interact with parks or public realm (i.e. roadway reconstruction, roads and sidewalks, redo of Ambulatory Care Clinic); maximizing opportunities to work together
- Privately-owned public spaces – identify and develop
- Way-finding; make it a visitor amenity so people come to Minneapolis for its great park system or the connectivity of green space
- Target the MPCA storm water management goal that 1.1 inches in 24 hours be taken offline by something other than a pipe
- Coordinate with other working groups (Downtown Entertainment Working Group, 2025 Plan) who have already done a lot of work so efforts are not duplicated

*Please share one challenge you anticipate for the projects.*

- Nicollet Mall work starting in the next year; integrate with transit; with building and planning being done concurrently being careful not to contradict what is currently under construction
- Prioritize all of the Downtown activities and determine how they fit into this plan  
[Ms. Monson clarified that when the City uses the term “physical framework” it does not mean designing streetscapes but developing a policy framework to use for leveraging and communicating on future projects. Public Works owns the streetscape.]
- Regarding transit, it would be helpful to know what is happening with Fourth Street given the current and future changes and development in Downtown East
- Find ways to make these public spaces work for all users, be welcoming and accommodating to everyone who has a reason to be there
- From a Public Works perspective, identify tools that fit in our tool box based on lessons learned, experiences of others, seasonal challenges; how new innovations and known limitations can be used in how we do business  
[Ms. Shelby added that this is a crucial piece because Public Works is a crucial partner; much of the public realm is operated and maintained by them. Additional tools that can be identified and deployed will be explored and implemented.]
- Thoughtfully ensure that new strategies be added to ADA plan and how they get encapsulated
- Create intentional milestones, attract and align opportunities that will move/activate the plan  
[Ms. Shelby said that the next year will bring an opportunity to test new strategies as we move forward. Ms. Monson added that public-private partnerships will be important in activating Downtown because the City (Public Works and CPED) can’t do it alone. There will be opportunities for others to help with implementation and milestones. Some owners may appreciate the opportunity to become engaged in enhancing and activating their spaces: i.e., adding benches, trash cans, tables and chairs, or programmed events to large plazas.]
- Buy-in from elected officials who will be voting on this, and from the business community
- The data needs to back up “yes” or “no”

*Please share one opportunity that we should not miss for this process.*

- Public Works CIP – community engagement on those needs to begin
- Need to coordinate within the City and all the different departments because so much is going on
- On capital improvement/construction projects, give a specific dollar amount to add value (i.e. trees, lights)
- As projects are being implemented, specifically impacting public right-of-way, make sure that pedestrian and vehicular needs are being met, be mindful of detours/road closings
- Integrate with transit – Metro Transit, Metropolitan Council, Transportation Policy Plan, others; Service Improvement Plan essentially makes the case for additional legislative dollars, \$75M year operating increase; number of buses and riders will increase in the next 5-6 years, which means more people using passenger waiting areas
- Community engagement beyond the typical forums and meetings  
[Ms. Ringold added that there are a lot of fun opportunities for interactive engagement between and among the City, TAC members, members of the community and visitors. It will be important to capture the ideas they generate.]
- Mississippi River – make sure way-finding/routes include connections between Downtown and the River
- Coordinate with MNDOT because they have so much of the publicly-owned land; 2025 Plan calls for treating freeway entrances as gateways and assets for green infrastructure; currently a

Downtown booster leads MNDOT and is ready to engage in conversations; freeway embankments have such poor soil trees cannot be grown

- Continue trails through Downtown, making it a big trailhead for pedestrians and bikes [Ms. Monson added that she would like to see these trails as commuter trails, not just recreational, which means they should connect. Also, the Protected Bikeways Project is almost done and there will be some synergy between that work and this process.]
- Avoid putting pedestrian paths over or under freeways when looking at connection opportunities.
- Opportunity for large corporations to sponsor programs in parks, especially for children [Ms. Monson mentioned the importance of identifying new revenue models in public rights-of-way, i.e. concessions, coffee kiosks, since one challenge is lack of funding sources.]
- Engaging the neighborhoods outside of Downtown as it is part of their neighborhood
- Coordinate to create one message for public funding opportunities, like state bonding requests
- Make sure that Downtown companies are reaching out to employees to build constituencies in Downtown parks among residents of neighboring cities and suburbs
- Identify capital fund items that private partners can fund; create packages of items to present to corporations, i.e. trees, lighting, but include operations and maintenance
- Consider alternative valuation processes, like B3 or I-Tree, in design decisions (i.e., determining where, or whether or not, to plant trees); make data-driven decisions
- Look at what is underground as far as building encroachments and utilities and include that information in the asset inventory; use that information to determine where real opportunities exist for realistic implementation
- Metro Transit initiative to improve passenger information at bus stops
- Be mindful of potential “game changers” – Post Office vacating its space in Downtown, soccer stadium built Downtown
- Consider what the winter city looks like and how that factors into planning
- Include skyways in the public realm; they are privately-owned public space

Ms. Monson referred to an earlier comment about the importance of visitors. This is an opportunity to advance the image of Minneapolis, which is already famous for its park system, connecting visitors to assets like the River. Regarding way-finding, this year we hope to set the table for a conversation among stakeholders about a possible future way-finding plan; identifying assets, priority connections, integration. We will also finish working with the DNR on the new critical area rules governing riverfront that will result in a requirement by the state for the City to revisit and refresh some of our adopted policies governing the riverfront in conjunction with the comprehensive plan update, and may open some new opportunities.

*What resources are you concerned that we don't know about/that you think will be important for us to understand?*

- Look at other cities – New York City, Chicago
- Target Field way-finding plan is only a couple of years old and might be useful [Ms. Shelby said her intern has done research on other way-finding plans. Ms. Monson wasn't aware of Target Field's way-finding plan and said it would be useful when this project is undertaken next year.]
- Traffic Management Plan for Vikings stadium; it will be done before August 16 and will include way-finding
- DID, which has had a pretty narrow focus in its five years of existence, is beginning a strategic planning process in the next six months to reevaluate what they do and consider adding and expanding service areas and service levels, especially in Downtown East

- DID is developing a business plan for the Conservancy which was laid out in the Downtown 2025 Plan
- Evaluation processes – establish partnerships with Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and departments at the University of Minnesota (Humphrey Institute, College of Design); engage graduate students in evaluating how designs perform
- Downtown transit initiatives – transit-way projects, Green and Blue Line extensions (Southwest and Bottineau) bringing in more people along the Fifth Street corridor; stations on the fringe of Downtown (Van White and Royalston); arterial BRT lines (Penn, Chicago, Emerson-Fremont, Orange Line); I-94 managed lanes between the two downtowns
- Encourage tech industry to develop apps; incentivize with awards, but it could be a business opportunity if they wanted to market it commercially; Hackathon is scheduled for February
- Historic district/resources
- Service Area Master Plans – focusing on Downtown and South this year; goal is to have all of them done by 2018

Ms. Monson invited anyone who has mentioned specific projects that we should be aware of to send an email, listing those projects with links and contacts, so that a list can be created of things that should be monitored. Please send these thoughts to Marsha Wagner [marsha@castlevisions.com]

*What stakeholders have we missed on the TAC?*

- Engage with schools and activities, thinking about city school kids being users – Trent Tucker, Athletic Director for school system
- Private utilities
- Public Safety, Minneapolis Police Department
- Private developer that has experience working in City
- BOMA
- MNDOT
- Downtown Commons representative
- David Frank, CPED/North Loop

A request was made for TAC members to receive a list of Steering Committee members. That will be distributed when it has been finalized. Going forward, the agenda will be split so that City issues and Park Board issues will be separated, with a set amount of time for each item.

## **9. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.